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SUBJECT: SURINAME: USA TRADE SHOW 2008 (BFIF FUNDED)

PARAMARIBO 00000308 001.2 OF 002

REF:

- A) STATE 77128
- B) STATE 73258
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¶1. (U) Summary. The Embassy and the American Chamber of Commerce of Suriname held their ninth annual "USA Trade Show 2008," from July 18-20, 2008. The only professional trade show held in Suriname featuring U.S. products and services, approximately half of the USA Trade Show's expenses came from Business Facilitation Incentive Funds (BFIF). Twenty-two companies participated in the show, and many reported increased sales of their products immediately following the USA Trade Show. End Summary.

¶2. (U) The Embassy and the American Chamber of Commerce of Suriname (AmCham) formed a public-private partnership to put on the ninth annual "USA Trade Show," from July 18-20, 2008, in Paramaribo. The three-day event attracted almost 3000 visitors in this country of less than half a million. The USA Trade Show is the only professional trade show held in Suriname which features U.S. products and services. This was only the fourth year that Post organized the Trade Show in conjunction with the AmCham. A fairly young organization, the AmCham has been in existence only five years. Post's objective is to gradually give increased responsibility for organizing the Trade Show to the AmCham in order to (in the long-term) make this show a self-sustaining project not requiring Business Facilitation Incentive Funds (BFIF).

¶3. (U) Twenty-two companies participated in the Trade Show, including ten first-time participants. In addition, Suriname's State Partner, South Dakota, purchased a booth which it stocked with South Dakotan products and literature. Representing the State of South Dakota at the Trade Fair was S.D. Cabinet Secretary for Tourism and State Development Richard Benda. South Dakota's participation was coordinated by LTC Tracy Settle, Director of the South Dakota National Guard's South Dakota-Suriname State Partnership Program. The AmCham and the Embassy's Business Education and Resource Center (BERC) also had booths at the Trade Show to advertise their services.

¶4. (U) The media attended the Trade Show's opening ceremony on July 18, and all newspapers and television news stations covered the event. Opening remarks were presented by U.S. Ambassador Schreiber Hughes, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Trade and Industry Mauro Tuur, and AmCham President Andy Rusland. Media coverage of the opening ceremony, combined with BFIF paid advertisements on television and in the print media, contributed to the high public turnout for the show. The Embassy Public Affairs Assistant arranged for the AmCham Executive Director to be featured in radio and television interviews leading up to the Trade Show.

¶5. (U) Embassy and AmCham staff spoke with a random sampling of Trade Show attendees in order to assess the success of the media strategy and reactions of the target audience. The overall impression of attendees, including many first-timers, was positive, although some cited they had expected even more exhibitors.

¶6. (U) A "hot wash" with Trade Show exhibitors on July 25, as well as follow-up telephone calls by the Commercial Assistant, showed concrete, positive results from Trade Show participation. One exhibitor, the Clean IT carpet cleaning service, received 10 orders during the Trade Show and received a number of telephone orders afterwards from Show attendees. Another exhibitor, Wintel N.V., an information technology company, had as its goal the registration of 50 new members for its voicemail services. Wintel exceeded this target by registering 75 new members. It also registered 115 new clients for its IT Solution Services. Still another exhibitor, AVON products marketer Beauty and Home Systems, provided free makeovers at its booth and over 100 people signed up for consultations with an AVON lady. The company also attracted a number of women interested in becoming AVON sales representatives. Exhibitor "Laparkhan" reported that more than 200 people either signed up or requested more information on its air freight/sea freight mailbox service. Laparkhan also secured a number of new clients for its freight and money order business, and reported that it is still receiving telephone calls from Trade Show attendees wanting to place orders. Exhibitor Infinity N.V. registered 40 potential clients during the Show for its telecommunication and security products.

¶7. (U) Aside from the commercial success of the USA Trade Show, arguably the Show's most far-reaching achievement was as a catalyst for growth within the AmCham. In past years, Embassy staffers were obliged to carry the bulk of the organizational responsibility for the Trade Show, including the time-consuming task of arranging the

PARAMARIBO 00000308 002.2 OF 002

venue and signing up exhibitors, in part due to the young AmCham's perceived inability to assume these responsibilities. This year, the AmCham took on all the logistically difficult tasks as it arranged for the venue, frames for the booths, security, and exhibitor recruitment. Moreover, whereas in past years the U.S. government contribution of USD \$5,000 represented the bulk of the Trade Show budget, a preliminary assessment of costs this year shows AmCham invested greater finances in the Trade Show than the U.S. government (if the representational costs of the opening ceremony and reception are excluded from the calculation).

¶8. (U) Post will report, via Septel to EEB, the complete breakdown of tradeshow expenditures.

SCHREIBER HUGHES